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Heraldic Symbolism and Color Imagery in William Morris's *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of English

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

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by

June G. Lubowinski

1989

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

June G. Lubowinski

Approved, April 1989

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines William Morris's use of heraldry as an important reoccurring image in The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems. Given Morris's extensive knowledge of the Middle Ages in both historical and cultural areas, this study recognizes the significance of the symbolism in the colors and devices of Morris's heraldic allusions.

Studies of Morris's color imagery have resulted in a better understanding of his poetic design. This paper expands the investigation of Morris's imagery to include heraldry and demonstrates that Morris's heraldic images further enhance the emotional impact of the poetry and provide the reader with a richer symbolism.

Heraldic Symbolism and Color Imagery in William Morris's *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*

I. Introduction

William Morris used brilliant primary colors to create vivid images in The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems. Scholarly study of Morris's color imagery reveals symbolic meanings which enhance the emotional as well as the visual elements of a scene, and add to the understanding of Morris's poetic design. The enrichment gained from the investigation of Morris's color symbolism contributes to an interest in further exploration of his imagery to discover elements containing similar and additional meanings. Given Morris's lifelong fascination with the Middle Ages, resulting in his familiarity with many sides of medieval culture, heraldry may be viewed as an important reoccurring image throughout The Defence of Guenevere. By examining Morris's uses of heraldry, and by interpreting the symbolism in the heraldic colors and devices, one may discover further clarification of meaning that increases the impact of feelings and images in The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems.

The symbolism in heraldry is inseparably linked with color symbolism as the devices and charges of heraldic art are given meaning and differentiation through various tinctures. Therefore to facilitate the study of Morris's heraldic images in The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems, it is useful to consider existing evaluations of his color imagery and symbolism. In a valuable assessment of Morris's

color usage, Josephine Koster Tarvers concludes of his poetic design that

> To assume that Morris' intention was to use colors as symbols systematically in these poems would be fallacious. Like the other Pre-Raphaelite poets, he was not as much concerned with painting symbolic pictures as with creating vivid, compelling images. But his use of conventional color imagery and its associated values to direct response to the poems, very probably influenced by his reading and the temper of his surroundings at the time the poems were written, seems too careful and consistent to be merely casual. . . . Morris' exploitation of the traditional range of color imagery adds texture and vitality to his poems, both in this volume and throughout his work.[1]

That is to say, Morris may not have intentionally set out to use colors as symbols in his poetry. However, Morris's considerable knowledge of the meanings attributed to various hues possibly influenced his selection of colors so that they may often be given a symbolic interpretation. In most examples the symbolism supports the emotion that Morris is portraying, and although the use may not be systematic, it

is compatible with Morris's poetic design. The same unconscious influence may exist in Morris's heraldic imagery, where his knowledge of medieval history and culture included an understanding of the symbolic images and colors that were a part of daily life. As a result of his familiarity with the Middle Ages Morris created images using the symbolic devices and tinctures of heraldry with the expertise of a person born in that time period.

Heraldry played an such an important role in the Middle Ages that any student of the time, especially one as thorough as Morris, would readily absorb its value. Rodney Dennys, a present-day herald explains the influence of heraldry in medieval culture and society:

> The romances and poems of the Middle Ages show that armory was regarded as a gay and colourful part of life, and this is echoed by many of the heraldic treatises. Heraldry was fun, and at the same time packed with allegory and symbolism, embellishing with a wealth of colour houses, clothes and books, while serving at the same time the practical necessities of war and politics. Like most things in the Middle Ages there was a certain cheerful disorder about it, for only since the Tudors have writers on armory tried to turn it into a portentous and pedantic science.[2]

A knowledge of heraldry and its symbolism in the Middle Ages enabled one to read the history, recognize the social structure, and understand the religious significance of any person or place in one's environment. And for Morris, indeed, a knowledge of heraldry was not a "pedantic science," it was an important connection with the past. He used the bold identifiable colors and devices of heraldry to produce a more truthful image of medieval times. The "cheerful disorder" of heraldic color symbolism allowed him a multi-dimensional meaning for his imagery.

There can be little doubt that Morris had a knowledge of heraldry. In The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems he demonstrates an effective understanding of the armorer and his art of heraldic emblazonment through such lines as, "I knew them by the arms that I was used to paint / Upon their long thin shields; but the colors were all grown faint, / And faint upon their banner was Olaf, king and saint" ("The Wind," 82-84). Morris's own description of the refrain "Two Red Roses Across the Moon" is "the device pictured on the knight's shield or banner."[3] His word choice in this description indicates a knowledge that included the proper heraldic vocabulary ("device" for design) and treatment of the subject matter (displaying arms on a shield or banner).

To fully appreciate and understand Morris's expertise in assimilating medieval history, literature, and art forms for his own works, one must recognize the extent to which Morris

was influenced by the Middle Ages. A brief review of Morris's early life, focusing on the events which contributed to his knowledge of heraldry and medieval color symbolism, demonstrates the growth of his devotion to the Middle Ages. Biographies reveal that Morris displayed an interest in the medieval period at a very early age. His youthful pursuits included exploring Gothic remains and devouring books on archaeology and medieval architecture.[4]

Morris's initial interest in heraldry may have come from his childhood reading of the works of Sir Walter Scott, who popularized the Middle Ages for the nineteenth century readers. According to Joanna Banham, "Scott did not sentimentalize the distant past . . . . His works, in fact deflated the lyrical view of medieval history, and portrayed the times as rough and raw, endowing characters with passions and energies that were inspiring to his nineteenth-century audience."[5] Scott's medieval writing was romantic, and contained a mixture of the heroic and the common. His representation of the Middle Ages as "robust rather than poetic"[6] made his characters seem more lifelike and helped to demythologize the medieval settings. Morris was captivated by Scott's lively depictions and credits Scott with inspiring his own love of Gothic architecture as well as his sense of romance.[7]

The works of Scott also contain a profusion of accurate heraldic descriptions that were probably absorbed by young Morris. In a nineteenth-century heraldic handbook, John

Cussans emphasized the value of heraldry in a gentleman's education, and named Scott as an important armorial author. Cussans complimented Scott's skillful use of heraldry by quoting from his works, illustrating the link between a knowledge of heraldry and the greater appreciation of literature.

> To one who is totally unacquainted with heraldic usances and phraseology, the writings of many of our best and most entertaining authors lose half their interest. The historical romances of Sir Walter Scott abound in armorial allusions. In Marmion, for example we read--
>
> 'The ruddy lion, ramped in gold.'
>
> Now, unless we were previously aware that a Red Lion rampant, on a gold field, within a tressure or border, was the device emblazoned on the standard of Scotland, this line would be unintelligible.[8]

Cussans uses lines from Scott's Marmion to illustrate the different heraldic flags, giving further testimonial to the authenticity of Scott's heraldic representations.[9] Morris's early immersion in Scott's writing, and his subsequent interest in medieval literature and culture, exposed him to the correct "heraldic usances and phraseology." The knowledge of heraldry gained from this reading gave Morris a

greater appreciation for a colorful rendering of the Gothic world.

Heraldry for Morris took on an even greater importance when his family acquired a coat of arms in 1843. Mckail relates the story as a significant incident. The Morris "grant-of-arms" had as devices

> Azure, a horse's head erased argent between three horse-shoes or, and for crest, on a wreath of the colours, a horse's head couped argent, charged with three horse-shoes in chevron sable.[10]

Possessing a coat of arms made an indelible impression on Morris, enriching his growing sense of connection with the past as well as stimulating his imagination.

> The boy of nine was already of an age to be keenly interested in heraldry; and what ever may have been the reasons which induced Garth and Clarenceux to assign these bearings, they became in his [Morris's] mind something deeply if obscurely, associated with his life. He considered himself in some sense a tribesman of the White Horse. In the house which he built for himself afterward the horse's head is pictured on tiles and glass

> painted by his own hand. To the White Horse of the Berkshire Downs, which lies within a drive of his later home at Kelmscott, he made a regular yearly pilgrimage.[11]

This fascination with the horse remained with Morris, emerging in several heraldic allusions pertaining to horses in The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems. Morris recognizes the horse as a necessary armorial trapping for the knight. In "The Defence of Guenevere" Launcelot is mounted on a "roan charger" ("The Defence of Guenevere," 294), as he rescues Guenevere from execution. The heraldic splendor of Launcelot's red warhorse may be representative of Launcelot's passion for Guenevere, as well as a symbol of the nobility of his knighthood. The use of the red horse to indicate passion and nobility in "The Defence of Guenevere" is then contrasted with the use of an undecorated grey horse in the following poem "King Arthur's Tomb." In this poem a weary Launcelot is seen riding a plodding grey horse ("King Arthur's Tomb," 100). The grey color of the horse may indicate Launcelot's penitent state of mind concerning his affair with Guenevere. In addition the color grey combined with the horse's dragging gait serves as a reminder of an inevitable movement towards death.[12] Morris uses a warhorse in "Sir Peter Harpdon's End" to accentuate the medieval tone of the poem. Sir Peter Harpdon recalls his own battle prowess and horsemanship while taunting Clisson, reminding him of a time "When you were

nearly swooning from the back / Of your black horse" ("Sir Peter Harpdon's End," 356-357). Clisson's "black horse" and cowardly performance may be a subtle indication of his "evil" position against Sir Peter in both battle and politics. In "Concerning Geffray Teste Noire" Morris captures the pageantry of a tournament by describing a lady ceremoniously leading "By a chain of silver twined about her wrists, / Her loving knight, mounted and arm'd to win / Great honour for her, fighting in the lists" ("Concerning Geffray Teste Noire," 146-148).

Morris's further contact with heraldry occurred during his years at Oxford, where friendship with Edward Burne-Jones extended his knowledge of the artistic elements of the medieval age. Morris studied illuminated manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, particularly a thirteenth century book of the Apocalypse, furthering his knowledge of medieval color symbolism.[13] With Burne-Jones, Morris also read Keats and Tennyson, absorbing the color of the Middle Ages as pictured by these poets, and he avidly studied Ruskin's "The Nature of Gothic."[14] It was together in 1855 that Burne-Jones and Morris discovered Malory's Le Morte D'Arthur, purchasing the Southey edition (1817).[15] Malory and the legends of King Arthur were a strong influence in Morris's artistic and literary endeavors for the next few years.

In 1855 Morris decided to devote himself to art rather than to the church, and he began working with the architecture firm of George Edmund Street. After meeting

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, with whom Burne-Jones was studying painting, Morris "fell under the Pre-Raphaelite spell" and gave up his architecture for painting.[16] For two years Morris painted with Rossetti, but he found that his interests were shifting to writing and the decorative arts. At this time Morris was writing The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems, and was also creating illuminated manuscripts in the style of his favorite medieval texts. These "visual counterparts of the poetry in the Defence of Guenevere" display Morris's mastery of medieval art forms and color usage.[17]

Carole Silver suggests that by 1856 Morris had established his color imagery in his contributions to The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine. She defines his color symbolism as having certain values:

> Red is . . . passion and violence. Green is . . . hope and happiness . . . white for purity; purple for empire and penance; blue for the heavenly or divine; and gold, associated with life's brilliance and value.[18]

Silver comments on the intensity of the colors in Morris's early stories, noting their similarity to the colors in Pre-Raphaelite paintings and stained glass. They also bear a striking resemblance to the medieval color symbolism associated with heraldry (see Appendix).

Morris's literary color choices might well have been influenced by his art studies with Rossetti. Robert Keane, in an article entitled "Rossetti and Morris: This Ever Diverse Pair," indicates that in spite of basic differences, Morris and Rossetti profoundly influenced each other's work between 1856 and 1862.

> Rossetti gave intensity to Morris' writing, and though Morris succeeded little as a painter, his mentor led him into the more congenial field of design and decoration. Morris, in turn, imbued his master with his own medieval enthusiasms and induced the master to try design himself.[19]

Morris admired Rossetti's painting and commissioned several water-colors for his personal collection. A Rossetti watercolor entitled "Arthur's Tomb," painted in 1855, is thought to have been the inspiration for Morris's poem "King Arthur's Tomb," published in The Defence of Guenevere.[20] Morris also worked closely with Rossetti on an art project in 1857, painting Malory-inspired murals for the Oxford Union Debating Hall. In this work Rossetti and Morris, along with the other contributors, shared the same palette of bright colors for their individual works. Coventry Patmore described the unusual luminosity of the murals as glowing with a "colouring so brilliant as to make the walls look like the margin of a highly-illuminated manuscript."[21]

Morris's color imagery in The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems re-creates the sense of illuminated manuscripts in much the same manner as did the Oxford Union murals. The vivid almost glowing hues, like those of the murals, seem to be inspired by Morris's association with Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites. Perhaps Rossetti's influence may be seen in the choice of specific colors, but the symbolism in Morris's color imagery is more closely related to his medieval studies. Morris uses colors with the prescribed medieval interpretations to enhance the feeling of the Middle Ages in his writing, and to imply meanings that would have been familiar to someone viewing an illuminated manuscript in that age.

In "The Pre-Raphaelites and Mediaeval Illuminated Manuscripts," Julian Treuherz assesses Morris as more "scholarly" than Rossetti in the expression of a "personal kind of mediaeval idiom."[22] Where Rossetti borrowed freely from medieval sources, blending elements from different time periods to create his images, Morris was more interested in rendering the truth. This veracity in art may also be observed in Morris's writing, as the medieval colorist overcomes the Pre-Raphaelite poet and takes control of the scene. Tarvers addresses the role of the medieval when she defines Morris's color imagery technique in The Defence of Guenevere poems.

> An examination of the colors most frequently used by Morris in The Defence volume show[s] that, using them in an emblematic manner much like that of his favorite medieval authors, he employs their full range of connotation to elicit various emotional responses in his readers.[23]

The value of Morris's fidelity to his medieval sources and traditions may be observed in his use of heraldry to produce images. Morris uses heraldic allusions both with and without color terms in The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems. Either way, the carefully accurate heraldic or armorial descriptions serve to enhance the medieval mood or scene, providing an air of veracity for the action. The descriptions containing colors have the added dimension of heraldic color symbolism. By combining the two images, the heraldic device and the symbolic color, Morris often strengthens a sense of reality or historical accuracy, while augmenting the underlying emotions of a scene.

Margaret Lourie's analysis of the functions of Biblical and fairy tale allusions in the fantasy poems of The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems is also applicable to Morris's heraldic allusions throughout the volume. One may view the allusions as subtle guides for reader awareness, suggesting images to enhance rather than clarify the meaning of the poem.

> They work by nuance and indirection, not appealing to the analytic faculties but increasing the universality of the poem and enriching its emotional texture.[24]

An examination of Morris's use of heraldry in the individual poems of The Defence of Guenevere volume shows that the heraldic allusions provide the reader with a strong visual image as a point of reference that is identifiable and accurately medieval, while unobtrusively indicating the tone or ambience Morris wishes to convey.

II. Analysis of Heraldic Elements Within Specific Poems

"The Defence of Guenevere"

Morris uses heraldry in the "The Defence of Guenevere" to enhance a mood or emotion, rather than to produce an exact historical depiction. The poem is Guenevere's defence against the charge of adultery, which she delivers to a court composed of Arthur's knights. For the reader relying only on the arguments presented, rather than a previous knowledge of the story, Guenevere's guilt or innocence is never clearly established. Morris weaves symbolic images into Guenevere's arguments that are possibly included to confuse her judges. One has the feeling that Guenevere is adept at creating

compelling scenes with the intent of sweeping listeners into HER emotions and responses to the situations.

"The Defence of Guenevere" contains an unusual heraldic allusion occurring in the incident of the angel and the choosing cloths (19-46). The reader can never be certain as to whether this is Guenevere consciously throwing her judges off guard, or actually telling a parable that illustrates her own emotional confusion. The importance of this incident is Morris's portrayal of the bewildering choices experienced by everyone involved with the trial. Without examining the symbolic meanings, the values and differences between red and blue become as impossible to determine as Guenevere's guilt or innocence. Morris fashions traditional symbolism into multi-dimensional images that force the reader (just as Guenevere forces her judges) to look deeper than the surface. Through evaluation of these images one recognizes the complexity of choosing "blue" and not simply accepting its traditional value as "Heaven's color."

The choosing cloths of red and blue are not obviously heraldic, but given Morris's fondness for accuracy in portraying the medieval, one has to consider them as representative of two different types of heraldic flags. The fact that there is no device emblazoned on either cloth further illustrates the complexity of Guenevere's choice. Morris includes no heraldic device (such as a lion or ring) to give a clue as to which flag is the best. It is even more difficult to make the selection when "one of these strange

choosing cloths was blue, / Wavy and long, and one cut short and red" (34-35).

The "blue" cloth is "wavy and long," a description that is reminiscent of the flowing heraldic flag, the standard. "Wavy" is a heraldic term meaning rippled or undulating and is most commonly used to describe partition lines on a shield.[25] Guenevere's description of the blue cloth as "wavy" gives her listeners the appealing image of a cloth or flag rippling luxuriously. This is perhaps an unconscious effort to bias them towards her own choice.

The shorter "red" cloth the angel holds is apparently a banner. If Guenevere were aware of heraldic symbolism, she would know that she should choose the "red" cloth banner over the "wavy" blue standard. By the laws of heraldry, standards may be carried by anyone owning a grant-of-arms, while the banner is a distinctive mark of honor won by the bearer.[26] The "red" color of the banner may indicate connections with nobility, a further reason for choosing it over the "blue" color which is placed lower in the hierarchy of heraldic tinctures.[27]

Guenevere's choice of the blue cloth over the red in "The Defence of Guenevere" has been discussed by literary scholars who provide a wide variety of reasons based on numerous symbolic elements in the scene. Dennis Balch, in his article "Guenevere's Fidelity to Arthur in 'The Defence of Guenevere and King Arthur's Tomb,'"[28] views Guenevere's choice of the blue cloth as the decision to marry Arthur.

Balch believes that the color "blue" links Arthur with Heaven as a Christian king. The decision the angel offers becomes whether to marry Arthur with an uncertain outcome, rather than the decision being whether to commit adultery with Launcelot for which the outcome is certain unhappiness. Guenevere makes her choice and when the marriage with Arthur turns into "Arthur's great name and his little love," (83) the blue cloth represents "hell" (10).

Tarvers offers a different interpretation from Balch, based on her conclusion that Launcelot and Guenevere are more associated with emotion-filled "red" imagery than with the traditional symbolic meanings of "blue" (see Appendix).

> Both Guenevere and Launcelot. . .are strongly linked with the color red in Morris' poems. Thus, the affirmative suggestions that the blue cloth represents Launcelot or that Guenevere's choice represents a defiant act of rebellion against a hellish marriage seem contradicted by the actual evidence of the poetry. Instead, Guenevere seems to be condemned for not being true to herself. Her instincts and emotions lead her to ally herself with red time and time again. Yet at this moment, possibly the most crucial time of her life, she attempts to make a rational choice, picking the color she thinks she ought to choose ('God help!

> heaven's colour, the blue') instead of the one all her instincts and emotions must pull her toward.[29]

Tarver's interpretation works well within heraldic symbolism. In the heraldic sense Guenevere is condemned for her hypocrisy, as she chooses the cloth of blue (a heraldic color symbol for sincerity) over her inclination towards the red. Tarvers cites several examples from The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems and includes a description of Morris's painting of "Queen Guenevere" clothed in red garments, as evidence to establish red as Guenevere's color preference.[30] Red being the color most often associated with her, Guenevere then displays insincerity in her choice of the blue cloth. She is picking what she thinks she should choose, rather than what she wants. She either does not understand, or disregards the idea that a higher calling in life can also be symbolized by the red cloth banner. Perhaps Guenevere associates all "reds" with passion and emotion, therefore she cannot view the red cloth banner as a symbol of noble or divine ardor. Guenevere chooses "heaven's color," but because of the hypocrisy of her choice she receives "hell."

Morris concludes "The Defence of Guenevere" with a heraldic allusion that perhaps reinforces the idea that "red" is the cloth color Guenevere should have chosen. Blending the armorial trappings of a knight with the symbolic color of passion in this image, Morris portrays Launcelot riding to Guenevere's rescue on a heraldically noble "roan

charger"(294). Morris does not specifically say that Launcelot is clothed in armor displaying heraldic insignia, but the image is suggested by the use of the word "charger." A charger is a war-horse, and on the battle accoutrements a knight may display his arms. Therefore, the term "charger" invokes an image of a noble rescuing knight mounted on a large red war-horse, both arrayed in the heraldic splendor of emblazoned armour.

"King Arthur's Tomb"

Following Scott's style of portraying the medieval as robust, Morris reduces the sense of mythic unreality in his Malory-inspired poems by realistic descriptions of the knights arrayed in their armorial trappings. In "King Arthur's Tomb" Guenevere's memories produce lifelike images of the knights, which Morris does not cloud with specific color terms requiring analysis for hidden meanings. Rather, he allows the reader to see clearly "scowling Gauwaine" (330), "handsome Gareth" (331), and "Great Tristram" (335), who "though helmed you could trace / In all his bearing the frank noble knight" (335-36). There is no question about the feelings of Palomydes as he goes into battle, armed with emblazoned shield and helmet:

O, Palomydes, with much honour bear
Beast Glatysaunt upon your shield, above

Your helm that hides the swinging of your hair,
And think of Iseult, as your sword drives through
Much mail and plate. . . .(343-47)

The reader does not have to consider the color of Palomydes shield, or the tinctures with which the "Beast Glatysaunt" is emblazoned. It is not colorful pageantry that is called to mind by Morris's depiction of Palomydes. This is a portrait of a fierce warrior, his life consisting of his passion for Iseult and the cruel realities of battle.

There are, however, examples of heraldic color symbolism which enhance the visual image of pageantry in "King Arthur's Tomb" and which do provide an opportunity for Morris to suggest the underlying meanings. Through heraldic devices combined with a specific color the feelings or emotions are heightened in keeping with the theme of the poem.

Morris uses the green tapestry-hung room in "King Arthur's Tomb" to reflect the dual nature of the relationship between Launcelot and Guenevere. "Green" in medieval color symbolism has meanings of both "happiness" and "shame,"[31] which makes it an excellent color to use in depicting the lover's scenes. "Green" implies both the joy and the guilt they share in their love. Launcelot remembers the enchanted time with Guenevere when "in a cool green room all day / I gazed upon the arras giddily, / Where the wind set the silken kings a-sway" (86-89). The "cool green room" hung with emblazoned silk tapestries at first sounds pleasant,

luxurious, and restful. Morris uses the term "giddy" in describing Launcelot in the green room. This could be read as light-spirited with a heady happiness. However, the use of dual nature green as the primary color in the scene suggests there may be another cause for Launcelot's giddiness, one that will make him lightheaded and sick rather than lighthearted and happy (see Appendix).

By using "green" with its alternate meanings as the symbolic color in the image and joining it with the heraldic device of emblazoned tapestries, Morris shifts the tone of the scene from a lover's idyll to Launcelot's burden of shame. It is possible that Launcelot's guilt is causing his giddy feelings, and they indicate a sickness of spirit. The embroidered "silken kings" on the tapestries are perhaps a reminder of another king, Arthur, whom Launcelot has betrayed by being in the "cool green room." The overall effect of the passage then becomes unsavory, and the reader is left with an image of sickly "green" unhappiness and dishonor.

Morris again uses a combination of heraldry and color symbolism to enhance the image of failure, as Guenevere castigates Launcelot at their final meeting. Recalling forgotten duty and honor to his king by describing Launcelot in terms of his armorial bearings, Guenevere proclaims him "Banner of Arthur-with black-bended shield / Sinister-wise across the fair gold ground!" (368-69).

The use of the heraldic terms "black-bended" (meaning having a black line across) and "sinister-wise" (the

placement of the line diagonally across the breadth of the shield, upward to the viewer's right, the shield holder's left or sinister) make Guenevere's words seem threatening. In themselves these heraldic terms are not indicative of something bad, but through their use Morris has created a strong visual image of Launcelot's golden shield of honor crossed or spoiled by a "black" mark of "sadness" or "decrepitude."[32] Guenevere's title for Launcelot then sounds like a taunt or a lie, as he cannot with spoiled honor be the "banner" of Arthur. This trustworthy and noble position is denied to Launcelot because of the sin in his life. Morris makes certain that the reader realizes the sin is irreparable, representing it by the permanent black mark on the golden shield displayed for the world to see.

"Sir Galahad: A Christmas Mystery"

Scott's treatment of medieval pageantry is strongly suggested by Morris's use of colorful heraldic allusions in "Sir Galahad: A Christmas Mystery." Although more spiritual in theme than the tournament in Ivanhoe, Morris's depiction of Sir Galahad's supernatural investiture echoes Scott's use of symbolic heraldic splendor to enhance the medieval mood.

In Ivanhoe the preparations in expectation of the crowning of the "Queen of Love and Beauty" are a catalog of heraldic symbols. Scott sets the scene, decorates it and imbues it with underlying meaning through his use of heraldic colors and devices.

> Squires, pages and yeomen in rich liveries, waited around this place of honor, which was designed for Prince John and his attendants . . . .A train of pages and of young maidens, the most beautiful who could be selected, gayly dressed in fancy habits of green and pink, surrounded a throne decorated in the same colors. Among pennons and flags bearing wounded hearts, burning hearts, bleeding hearts, bows and quivers, and all the commonplace emblems of the triumphs of Cupid, a blazoned inscription informed the spectators that this seat of honor was designed for "La Royne de la Beaulte et des Amours."[33]

Scott's pageant is celebrating love and is dedicated to the physical embodiment of the emotion, the "Queen of Beauty and Love." The human representative of the spirit is to be chosen from the maidens and invested with the heraldic crown and pennon that have been emblazoned with symbolic hearts.

Morris's pageant is a more solemn occasion, but the heraldic allusions reflect Scott's use of emblems and tinctures. In a stage direction between lines of his verse drama, Morris sets the tone.

> Enter Two Angels in white, with scarlet wings; also Four Ladies in gowns of red and

> green; also an Angel, bearing in his hands a surcoat of white, with a red cross (stage directions between lines 152-153).

Morris's "angels in white with scarlet wings" are as appropriate for setting the scene as Scott's "squires, pages and yeomen in rich liveries." Each suggests the existence of a social hierarchy among the participants of the tournament and the investiture. The color of the clothing of the "squires, pages and yeomen" identifies them as the servants of specific families, as the livery color was usually adopted from a tincture in the family's coat of arms.[34] Corresponding to Scott's liveried servants, Morris indicates the heraldic celestial order of the angels by their wings. The scarlet wings identify them as the seraphim, the highest ranking in heavenly hierarchy who carry out the Lord's most important business.[35] These would be the choice messengers for the investiture of a Christian knight.

Scott's youths and maidens in "pink and green" and Morris's ladies in "red and green" embody symbolic good wishes, representing "youth and felicity," the happier qualities of "green" and both the "nobility and passion" of "pink" or "red." They are witnesses or supporters of the investiture and participants in the joyous honoring of the newly chosen "Queen" and "Knight." As supporters of the action taking place, these figures possibly correspond to the humans sometimes used in heraldic emblazonment to support the

device-charged shield. Through them the emotions or feelings represented by the color of their garments are conveyed to the scene.

The "heart"-emblazoned pennons of the "Queen" and the "white" surcoat with the "red" cross of the "Knight" are the traditional heraldic devices and trappings by which their new status is recognized. The hearts on the pennons announce the new "Queen's" association with "love." Her supporters will rally to this device, uphold it, honor it and, through it, pay homage to the emotion as well as the person chosen to embody it. The "red cross" identifies Sir Galahad as one chosen to be God's knight. Medieval tradition uses red and white together to indicate Christ, and Sir Galahad, by putting on the white garment emblazoned with the red cross, is symbolically renouncing his own earthly connections to follow a spiritually guided career in the livery of his Master.

"Chapel in Lyoness"

"Gold" and "silver," the metals of heraldry, lend their symbolic meanings to "The Chapel in Lyoness." Morris uses the "goodness" connotations of gold to show the status of the soul of the dying knight. The "purity" of silver reflects the hallowed nature of his surroundings. The overall effect of "Chapel in Lyoness" is rather like an illuminated manuscript with Morris accentuating the importance of specific devices by emblazoning them in gold and silver.

Sir Ozana is enclosed with gold, hidden from the sinful world by a screen of "gold" (37). The screen represents his separation from life on earth and his enclosure is a type of purgatory. He exists in a state almost between life and death within the enclosure, wondering if he is worthy of heaven. The "gold" of the screen symbolizes Ozana's connection with "goodness" and foretells his acceptance into heaven as a honorable knight.

Morris portrays the watchful Sir Galahad as having trouble keeping his mind in a spiritual frame. Wandering outside the chapel, he finds a peaceful garden with flowers that seems to offer some hope of relief for both his thoughts and for the suffering of Sir Ozana.

> There I pluck'd a faint wild rose,
> Hard by where the linden grows,
> Sighing over silver rows
> Of the lilies tall. . . .(46-49)

The silver lily is used in heraldry to represent the Virgin Mary.[36] The rows of silver lilies near the Chapel indicate her presence and evoke the feeling that the area is blessed or holy. The rose picked by Sir Galahad in that place of purity revives Ozana to the point that he is able to comprehend the truth of his own goodness (79) before he dies.

"Sir Peter Harpdon's End"

"Sir Peter Harpdon's End" demonstrates Morris's use of heraldry to increase the sense of historical accuracy in his settings, and at the same time imply something of the emotions of the characters. Sir Peter Harpdon exhibits a principal use of heraldry in the Middle Ages, as a means of recognizing friend or foe in times of war. He watches the approaching army and is able to identify his cousin by the flag he carries.

> There's a pennon now!
> At Last.
> But not the Constable's; whose arms,
> I wonder does it bear? Three golden rings
> On a red ground; my cousin's by the rood! (140-44)

The casual and natural manner in which Morris portrays the incident enhances the ordinary quality of the scene, making Sir Peter seem more lifelike. This in combination with the historical accuracy of the action increases the authenticity of Sir Peter's plight, strengthening him as a sympathetic character.[37]

Morris's depiction of the heraldic pennon gives evidence that Sir Peter's cousin is wealthy and powerful. The "red" field of the pennon symbolizes "nobility" and the "gold" of the ring device "wealth."[38] The heraldic description also implies the difficult relationship between Sir Peter and his

cousin. If the reader views the "red" pennon as an indication of "cruelty," an alternate meaning for heraldic red, the approaching pennon then becomes a warning to Sir Peter. The idea of a warning is corroborated by Sir Peter's response, "Well, I should like to kill him, certainly, / But to be kill'd by him--" (145-146). Suitably alerted to the situation, he prepares for the confrontation.[39]

In time, Sir Peter is captured and executed by his enemies. Clisson experiences a change of heart towards Sir Peter and sends a messenger to bring the news of his death to Lady Alice, Sir Peter's love. To comfort herself after Sir Peter's death, Lady Alice imagines that she has a large avenging army at her disposal. The heraldic allusions in Lady Alice's fantasy revenge increase the pathos of her situation. Her vision includes heraldic devices of "red crosses" (688) on the shields, and herself in control of both her emotions and the situation, appearing "pale and stern and tall, and with / My arms on my surcoat, and his therewith" (690-91). This is a helpless young woman's fantasy, placing herself in a heroic position, possessing fierceness, not to mention divine right, and an army that will be invincible. The joined "arms" (691) of Lady Alice and Sir Peter seem to become her personal emblem of power, announcing to the world their connection and thus justice in her reason for seeking revenge.

It would seem from the heraldic "red crosses" (688) that Lady Alice is wishing for an avenging army from England,

fighting under the banner of St. George. This would be historically correct, as Gascony (the location of the poem) remained faithful to England longer than any of the other French territories.[40] The banner of Saint George is a traditional English battle flag,[41] and by using its "red cross" rather than the English lions as a rallying point, Morris gives Alice's wish for revenge a nobler seeming purpose. Morris is again using a combination of red and white to suggest Christ or at least spiritual associations. Lady Alice craves a divine power for her army, giving them both the might and the right to exert the necessary "cruelty" (this time of disciplinary nature) associated with heraldic "red" to avenge Sir Peter's death.

"Rapunzel"

The heraldic allusions Morris uses in "Rapunzel" are designed to instill an element of reality into the fantasy situation by being accurately medieval, while continuing to enhance the good versus evil theme. Morris wishes his reader to believe in the characters as real enough to be deserving of sympathy or blame.

In "Rapunzel" Morris uses the golden lady helm crest correctly to identify the two knights who fight under the tower window as brothers.[42] Rapunzel relates their battle to Sebald, noting that one brother's helmet was badly damaged so that "The crest, which was a lady very fair, / Wrought wonderfully, was shifted from its place" (227-30). The other

brother is dead and so hacked apart as to be unrecognizable "but for his helm-crest, a gold lady fair / Wrought wonderfully" (243-44). The "lady very fair" and the "gold lady fair" are possibly the same three dimensional helm-crest figure denoting the family relationship of the two knights.

In heraldic emblazonment a golden lady is a fairly common device for a helm crest, representing a portion of a family's armorial emblazonment.[43] Morris may be suggesting that Rapunzel herself is represented by the "golden lady" or "the lady very fair" as her real name "Guendolen" means "fair." She is a "golden lady" in the thrall of evil, her goodness (symbolized by her golden hair) held captive by the evil of the witch. The brothers are "good," as indicated by the gold of their helm crest, but they also become captives of evil. Sebald recognizes them and relates the closeness of the relationship between the two.

> Ah, they were brothers then,
> And often rode together, doubtless where
> The swords were thickest, and were loyal men,
> Until they fell in these same evil dreams. (245-48)

The evil that holds Rapunzel against her will has the power to corrupt goodness, turning brother against brother. The "golden lady," the device that possibly represents the chivalrous action of their quest to rescue Rapunzel, becomes "shifted from its place" of importance by "evil dreams" of

jealousy, hatred or strife. The two knights bearing the "golden lady" crest, battle to the death.

Through the destruction of a heraldic flag, Prince Sebald symbolically ends the reign of the witch over the captive lady Rapunzel.

> I, Sebald, also, pluck from off the staff
> The crimson banner, let it lie below,
> Above it in the wind let grasses laugh. (256-58)

Morris is using "red" to indicate "cruelty," as the "crimson banner" of the witch is the symbol of her brutal dominion over Rapunzel. Throwing the banner to the ground indicates the issuing of a challenge to her evil power. The two brothers, attempting Rapunzel's rescue, had thrown the banner to the ground, but were bewitched into fighting each other. Sebald's removal of the banner includes casting it to a spot so lowly that the enemy's emblem of power is desecrated and negated. The heraldically cruel red of the banner is replaced with joyous gold and green imagery, and Rapunzel becomes "Guendolen" the "fair lady."

"Concerning Geffray Teste Noire"

The status of the knight whose bones are found in the wood in "Concerning Geffray Teste Noire" is established by his possession of "gold rowels to the spurs" (78). Morris

creates this small but historically accurate heraldic description as the foundation of John of Castel Neuf's vision concerning the knight and his lady. Through association with the "goodness" aspect of gold Morris builds a sympathetic image of the fallen "good" knight, even though nothing is really known about him.

The sad history is pieced together, until someone recognizes the skeleton as that of a woman. This information sparks John's memories and imagination, and he responds with the creation of a complete life history for the knight and lady, even picturing their participation in the pageantry of a tournament (144-48). Morris's bits of historical and heraldic accuracy, the gold spurs, armour, and clothing, establish credibility and refine the elements of chivalric love in John's story. The sympathy of the reader is captured so that there is a feeling of justice when John of Castel Neuf builds a shrine to honor the fallen knight and his lady (193-200).

The lion as a charge has frequent use in heraldry, and Morris places a "red" lion on a pennon flying over the troops of John of Castel Neuf. The single "red lion on the spear-head flapped" (54) with the speed of travel. The "red lion" is emblematic of leadership as well as the strength and courage that is needed for battle. Margaret Lourie suggests Morris may be alluding "to the arms of England, which were three gold lions on a red ground . . . but more probably he has simply invented an appropriately valiant device."[44] John

of Castel Neuf seems well represented by this device, even though it may be his Prince's or his commander's badge rather than his own. John is like the "red lion," as he hungers for the battle and represents the nobility of the color as one who likes to see justice accomplished.

"A Good Knight in Prison"

Morris's representation of heraldry is enhanced by his knowledge of illuminated manuscripts. The two medieval art forms share a similar color symbolism as well as emblematic figures. Morris combines images from heraldry and illuminated manuscripts in "A Good Knight in Prison" to achieve a sense of historical accuracy. In addition, the effect of the knight's emotional security is enhanced through imagery that illustrates his steadfast nature in the face of great danger.

The knight comforts himself by viewing the horrors of his foreign prison, "The stanchions half worn-out with rust, / Where to their banner vile they trust" (37-38), as reminiscent of illustrations in an illuminated prayer book (40). The "vile banner" probably carries the device of a monster closely resembling the prayer-book dragons emblazoned with "great plates of burnish'd gold" (45). Morris's knight is perhaps trying to reduce the psychological power of his enemies by equating their "vile banner" with picture-book dragons. Drawing on the connections with the "goodness" of heraldic and religious emblazoned gold, he is able to

diminish his fears. He clings to his memory and faith, it seems, in spite of the fact that during his imprisonment a "hopeless sojourn here, / No Christian pennon has been near" (83-84). Morris indicates that the knight has the strength of mind to persevere in adversity through his ability to recall the "goodness" promised by the "gold" in his faith's pictures.

"Old Love"

In the poem "Old Love," Morris reveals his detailed knowledge of heraldry by describing the device on the Duke's coat of arms as "green apples." The heraldic term for the green roundel, a solid circular shape, is "the pomme."[45] "Green" as in "King Arthur's Tomb" again has unhappy connotations in Morris's heraldic allusions of "Old Love." Sir Giles's lost love sits with her hands folded "Upon the silken cushions brave / With broidery of the apples green / My Lord Duke bears upon his shield" (52-54). Sensing immediately that the once animated and lovely Duchess has lost her spark of life, one can tell it is not just because of age. Morris shows that her life is easy through the luxurious image of her idle hands resting on a silken cushion, but unhappy as indicated by "green apples." The "green apples" of the Duke's coat of arms embroidered on the silk cushions of the Duchess represent her ownership by the Duke, but say nothing about love. The image of unripe, pale, and green apples symbolizes the "death" of the duchess's

spirit through her marriage, and perhaps "shame" at having married for wealth instead of love. Like the image of the "green" room in "King Arthur's Tomb," Morris uses the "green" apples to indicate remorse. Had the Duchess married Sir Giles, love would not have died with the passing of the passion of youth, but would have ripened perhaps into a satisfying "red" or "gold" maturity.

"Gilliflower of Gold"

Morris uses a golden helmet decoration, a gilliflower, as the focus of the description of a knight's tournament victory in "The Gilliflower of Gold." Like the golden lady helm-crest of the brothers in "Rapunzel," the golden gilliflower is more than a heraldic representation of a family emblem. The knight's golden gilliflower is a symbol for the emotions underlying the reality of the tournament. Morris's additional heraldic allusions describing the tournament, provide an accurate picture of the medieval pageantry which is juxtaposed with the musings of the gilliflower knight.

In "The Gilliflower of Gold" the facts are unclear as to the identity of the knight and his lady, as well as the circumstances creating the knight's obsession with "la belle jaune giroflee," and attitude of revenge during the tournament. Morris perhaps intentionally minimizes factual information to enhance a feeling of chivalry in the knight's actions, allowing the reader to become more sympathetic to

his cause. By using the knight's perspective to reconstruct the story, Morris provides the reader with an almost firsthand experience of a medieval tournament, regardless of the ethics of the situation. There exist hints of deception and death in the image of the lady with her head bowed over the red stained yellow flowers, but one is not certain whose deception or what type of death the knight recalls. Dianne Sadoff calls "The Gilliflower of Gold," "the thought or dream of love and death."[46] In reading the poem for erotic thematics, Sadoff believes that "like Malory, Morris represents sexuality. . .as intimately linked with death."[47] Silver says that in "The Gilliflower of Gold," "Morris connects the beauty of flowers with the terrible beauty of blood."[48] Both of these interpretations suggest that the "gilliflower bed" (42) containing "The yellow flowers stain'd with red" (43) over which the lady's head is "bow'd" (42) indicates an alteration in the relationship between the knight and the lady. The knight suffers a loss of physical love by the lady's wounds, either physical or mental, or even her actual death. Whatever has happened to the lady, the knight has adopted the gilliflower as his symbol for her, for love, and possibly for revenge, implying that the flower will again be stained with blood.

The gilliflower as the most important symbolic image in "The Gilliflower of Gold," was not simply a fortunate accidental choice for Morris. The gilliflower has many connections with medieval times in art forms, symbolism, and

in historical data, all of which would have been part of Morris's comprehensive knowledge of the Middle Ages. The gilliflower is a sweet-smelling member of the dianthus family and symbolizes "bonds of affection,"[49] as the name is derived from the old French "girofle" meaning "love flower."[50] This would seem to support the idea that the knight's "golden gilliflower" may represent his strong feelings for the lady.

> A GOLDEN gilliflower to-day
> I wore upon my helm alway,
> And won the prize of this tourney.
> Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflee.(1-4)

Morris may capitalize "GOLDEN" (1) in the first line of the poem to indicate the gilliflower that the knight wears is the symbol of his love (either her person or what has happened to her) elevated to a "noble" cause. By winning the tournament, he will make "right" the wrongs suggested by the "yellow" of the flowers that are "stain'd with red" (43 and 59).

The gilliflower image has inspired critical interpretations, and while its meaning is not as difficult to comprehend as the red and blue choosing cloths in "The Defence of Guenevere," there are elements in its symbolism that are unclear. Carole Silver describes the gilliflower as a "multiple image. . .where the ramifications of the central image become even more complex,"[51] and she provides the following threefold analysis to illustrate this point.

> The phrase which forms the poem's refrain "la belle jaune giroflee" (1:90-91) refers firstly, to an image of an actual flower "stain'd with red" because there are crimson streaks on its yellow petals; secondly, to an image of the floral token which the knight who narrates the poem wears in his tourney helm and which is stained with the blood of his opponents; thirdly, to the physical characteristics of the golden-haired, red-lipped lady he loves and in whose honor he fights. As he remembers her "quiet head/ Bow'd o'er the gilliflower bed" (l.91), he associates her beauty with that of the blossoms.[52]

One might question Silver's third point as to the gilliflowers representing the beauty of the lady because they share the same golden and red "physical characteristics." There is no actual description of the lady in "The Gilliflower of Gold," and it does not seem necessary for her to physically resemble a flower to be associated with it's beauty.

In the complex gilliflower image, Morris seems to use alternate medieval symbolic meanings for "yellow," as both "goodness" and "deceit."[53] It is easy to recognize the gilliflower as the symbol representing the lady and the love that the knight has for her, and see the "good" in this

association. The knight introduces the gilliflower image saying that "A GOLDEN gilliflower I wore today" (1) suggesting that the symbol has been ennobled. Perhaps he feels that his love has been raised to a higher level than the affection the simple yellow flower represents. When one realizes that "yellow" is also the medieval color most often associated with Judas, and discovers that the common English gillyflower is a pink flower,[54] the puzzle of "la belle jaune giroflee" becomes more complicated. It would seem that Morris was too careful a student of the medieval to make mistakes of this type, especially two errors in the same image. Therefore one might conclude that Morris intended an association of the "yellow" of the flower of love and the "red" stain, with a strong unmistakable image of deception and cruelty. By combining in the image two colors that have alternate symbolic meanings denoting something bad, Morris may be manipulating the reader to side with the knight in his quest for revenge. The yellow gilliflowers are not "deceitful," and the red stains are not "cruel" in themselves, but they are witnesses to evil in the form of a specific hurt, a deceitful action, or perhaps even the lady's death. One senses that Sir John whose "steel-coat" (29) the knight hacks with his axe "for my love's sake" (29) may have a strong connection with whatever has occurred.

In the multi-faceted symbolism of the gilliflowers, both the yellow stained red and the golden, one should be appreciative of Morris's heraldic sense in choosing this

device. In her notes to "The Gilliflower of Gold" Margaret Lourie tells of the frequent use of gilliflowers in medieval art forms, saying that

> Gilliflowers are common to both the heraldry and the poetry of the Middle Ages. In writing "The Gilliflower of Gold" Morris undoubtedly had in mind a number of coats-of-arms bearing this device as well as numerous ballads which mention gilliflowers.[55]

Keeping in mind Morris's familiarity with the gilliflower device, the capitalized "GOLDEN" in the first line of the poem may represent not only a symbolic noble cause, but also that the gilliflower the knight wears is a helm-crest.[56] It could be either a gilded three-dimensional figure, or a heraldically-emblazoned protective ridge on top of the helmet, rather than an actual yellow flower that the knight has picked from the bed of flowers that he mentions twice (lines 42, and 58). The idea of a gilliflower crest combined with the knight's repeated cry of "la belle jaune giroflee" suggests colorful heraldic emblazonment and pageantry that intensifies the medieval setting and the chivalric mood of the tournament. The knight must face other knights in battle and Morris's heraldic allusions facilitate the reader's ability to create mind pictures. As the gilliflower knight meets others in combat, the heraldic emblems of the "sun" (6)

and the "tabard" with the "three points of flame/ From a red heart" (30-31) seem to indicate that these adversaries are "good" knights, and were perhaps at one time the gilliflower knight's friends. One almost feels an inkling of his remorse as the gilliflower knight himself says that Sieur Guillaume came against him "with little blame" (31).

The gilliflower knight is the victor in the tournament and with all pageantry he is led to his "own crown and the Queen's place," (54). Morris apparently wishes the reader to assume that the "goodness" of the golden gilliflower has overcome the "evil" of the red-stained yellow gilliflowers. The success, however, has a bitter aftertaste as the knight can only share his victory with the memory of his love.

> I almost saw your quiet head
> Bow'd o'er the gilliflower bed,
> The yellow flowers stain'd with red -
> Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflee. (57-60)

The gilliflower knight seems to realize that the gratification of chivalric love and victory gained from a sense of duty cannot replace the pleasure and comfort of human intimacy.

"The Judgment of God"

The "blue owls" of the knight Roger's helm-crest and battle flag in "The Judgment of God" are examples of Morris's

most cryptic use of heraldry. It is difficult to interpret the device and the color symbolism of the image as they seem to be different from Morris's usual careful and accurate depictions. In notes for "The Judgment of God" Margaret Lourie relates that owls "adorn the crests of several English families--including that of Morris's brother-in-law Joseph Oldham--but in no case are the birds blue."[57] The heraldic authors list owls among the frequently used bird devices in emblazonment, but only provide examples that are silver.[58]

Morris may be purposely oblique with the creation of the "blue owl" device. The difficulty in interpreting the heraldic device mirrors the difficulty of Roger's position. In the narrative, Roger attests his guilt for the crimes that are being tried by the tournament, detailing his barbaric treatment of the enemy (19-24). Morris gives the reader a privileged look into Roger's psyche, allowing the complex blending of remorse and love that make up humans, even the enemy, to be seen. Roger has a great love for a woman named Ellayne and a grudging respect for his opponent Sir Oliver. In spite of Roger's crimes, the reader develops sympathetic feelings towards him.

Morris does not provide any inner revelations from Sir Oliver, so the reader is able to judge him only by his outward appearance. He is dressed in white and silver, heraldically linking him with "purity," "justice" and "hope."[59] These symbolic representations appear to designate Sir Oliver as the "good" knight, but because Morris does not

reveal his thoughts, the reader cannot be certain. In this case the blue of Roger's owls may be Morris's attempt to equalize the two men outwardly, as blue in heraldry is linked with heaven and sincerity. However, one remembers that Morris's only other use of heraldic blue is in "The Defence of Guenevere," and it is the color of the cloth that is symbolic of "hell."

If blue indicates "hell," then what do the owls symbolize in Roger's crest, and how does Morris fit the two together to form his intended image? Heraldry itself attaches no symbolic meaning to the owl, it is just a commonly used device. Morris is too careful a craftsman to have chosen this crest just because it is ordinary. Traditional Christian symbolism presents the owl as emblematic of both positive and negative qualities. In its negative guise the owl appears as an image of spiritual darkness, and in the positive it is representative of religious knowledge or "Christ as the light that illuminates the darkness."[60] It is possible that Morris wishes to convey the idea that Roger, like the owl, has a dual nature, with his war atrocities representing spiritual darkness, and his love and guilt the light of religious knowledge and salvation. Roger has sinned and has loved, and knowing himself completely, with no excuses now awaits the judgment of God. He will either die quickly at Sir Oliver's hand, or will be captured and killed by Sir Oliver's supporters.

There is no escape from death for Roger, and that is the "hell" of his knowledge as symbolized by the "blue owls."

"The Little Tower"

Morris's heraldic allusions in "The Little Tower" are used for historical and emotional embellishment, crafting a detailed picture of a minor but fierce battle. Morris portrays the speaker of the poem as a consummate fighter, spirited, and convinced of his politics. He urges his men to battle, exchanging "gilded scabbard" for "leather sheath" (6) riding to prepare the Little Tower for a siege of the "grim king" (33).

The banner in "The Little Tower" is a symbol of ownership and a hoped for future peace. It is referred to by the speaker as a rallying point for his own and his "Love Isabeau's" (53) emotions.

> The Little Tower will stand well here
> Many a year when we are dead,
> And over it our green and red,
> Barred with the Lady's golden head;
> From mere old age when we are dead. (54-58)

In a poem of extreme martial action, the assurances of the speaker to his "Love Isabeau" sound more optimistic than real. Using the heraldic device of their banner as a type of charm,

the speaker of the poem is invoking an image of stability for his war-torn demesne.

The image of a golden Lady conjures thoughts of The Virgin Mary and the ideal of peace. The Virgin Mary is never depicted in heraldry without the Christ child, so the "Lady" on the banner is simply a woman.[61] She may represent "Isabeau" who also has a "golden head," her blonde hair, or perhaps another goddess figure. There is some mention in the poem of witchcraft in connection with Isabeau, as the "grim king" (33) anticipates her death at "the stake and the witches' fire" (38). In any event, the presence of a golden lady makes an appealing image after the destruction of battle.

As can be seen from examples in "King Arthur's Tomb", "Old Love," and "Sir Peter Harpdon's End," Morris uses "red" and "green" to indicate unhappy or cruel emotional situations. Given the arduous task of maintaining one's land holdings in the Middle Ages, the combination of "red" and "green" on the speaker's banner might indicate a warning for the future. The overall feeling of "The Little Tower" is that victory may belong to the speaker, but only for a short time, regardless of his invocation of power as represented by his armorial banner.

"The Haystack in the Floods"

The color red used to describe an emblazonment of three lions in "The Haystack in the Floods" is the only specific

color mentioned in the poem. Morris again combines a color and a heraldic device to create an image that will have underlying meaning for the theme of the poem.

Morris uses the red to represent "cruelty" in this heraldic device where "that Judas, Godmar, and the three / Red running lions dismally / Grinn'd from his pennon,"(34-36). Reinforcing the meaning by coupling Godmar's name with Judas, Morris makes an unmistakable comment on the man's nature. The description of the red lions' expressions -- "dismally grinn'd" -- creates an image that is less than the noble demeanor usually associated with the king of beasts. Godmar then meets the reader's expectations of cruelty by exercising his authority without compassion, delivering brutish punishment, and completely ignoring justice.

"Welland River"

Indicating the state of the heart to be passion, the majority of Morris's heraldic allusions in the "Scottish" love ballad "Welland River" involve the color red (see Appendix). Morris's heroine Ellayne searches longingly for the sight of a "scarlet pennon" to announce the arrival of her absent and possibly unfaithful lover.

Over the marshland none can see
    Your scarlet pennon fair;
O, leave the Easterlings alone,

Because of my golden hair. (5-8)

There is the sense that the owner of the "scarlet pennon" is going to exhibit the "cruel" side of the color by abandoning Ellayne.

Lourie says that "Welland River" owes much to its ballad tradition, that

> In tenor, style, and diction "Welland River" is remarkably close to those early English ballads which Scott in Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border called "Romantic." Its narrative, like its language, cannot be traced to a single source but approximates a number of ballads. . .[which] all share a heroine whose lover has impregnated and then threatened to leave her. The stories always end with the lovers reconciled--though only after the lady has displayed her steadfast devotion.[62]

Even though Ellayne is more "passive and wistful than any of her earlier counterparts,"[63] Morris allows her to display the "courage" associated with "red." Red has become Ellayne's color, as she wears "scarlet" livery for her service to her lord, expanding her golden gown with stitches of "scarlet silk" to accommodate Sir Robert's growing baby. When Sir

Robert returns, Ellayne's faithfulness and quick wit recall him to "noble" behavior worthy of a "scarlet" pennoned knight.

Upon Sir Robert's arrival, Ellayne attracts his attention with a symbolic gesture, she throws a lily onto his steel cap (61-62). The allusion seems to be heraldic in nature as Ellayne is possibly placing her favor on the knight's cap, such as in a tournament, or reminding him of the symbolic helm-crest he should be wearing. Ellayne's lily as helm-crest, decoration, or favor is a sign to the other lady of prior claims on Sir Robert's interest.

Morris does not use specific color terms in the image of the lily and the steel cap, and at first one is reminded of silver (or white, as silver is portrayed in heraldic emblazonment) for both. In "The Chapel in Lyoness" the silver lily represents purity and the Virgin Mary, which are rather confusing images to appear in connection with Ellayne in "Welland River." If one remembers that Morris has also used "scarlet lilies" ("King Arthur's Tomb," 79) in another poem, to indicate the change in the relationship between Launcelot and Guenevere from chivalric love to sexual fulfillment, Ellayne's lily may be easier to interpret. Ellayne's lily is neither white nor red, suggesting that Morris is not referring to Ellayne's physical purity. The flower seems rather to symbolize Ellayne's love for Sir Robert, still true and pure in spite of his absence and apparent abandonment of her for another. Ellayne casts her

love at the steel cap of Sir Robert, asking for his attention. There is the possibility that Sir Robert may remain cold and unfeeling like the steel of his cap, by denying Ellayne and her love. The lily catches his attention giving Ellayne the chance to demonstrate the purity and depth of her love.

III. Conclusion

Morris's classification as a Pre-Raphaelite is evident through his use of multi-faceted imagery in The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems. His careful use of vibrant colors and emblematic devices enhances the visual as well as the historical and emotional perspectives in his poetry. He does not rely on color or heraldry alone to supply hidden meanings, but combines them, occasionally adding other symbolic imagery to produce his desired effect.

Not every poem in The Defence of Guenevere volume contains heraldry. The instances when Morris uses heraldry, either with or without accompanying color symbolism, are more than artistic or careful historic detailing of a scene. Morris uses traditional heraldic images to strengthen symbolic meaning in his poetry as well as to enhance the medieval atmosphere. The blue owls, the golden shield with the bar-sinister, and the golden lady helm-crests are motifs in heraldry that have a purpose in Morris's poetry. It is not Morris's intention to create something new, but rather to use the established imagery in a way that clarifies the scene

or characterization. Morris's medieval poems, through his use of heraldry, provide a sense of veracity to the age while presenting the reader with possibilities of more complex symbolic meanings.

APPENDIX

Treatises written through the ages have assigned various meanings and levels of importance to each of the tinctures and the metals of heraldry. An examination of the individual tinctures of heraldry is helpful in analyzing Morris's heraldic use of colors in The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems, allowing one to see the inclusion of this tradition in Morris's color vocabulary.

The principal tinctures and metals of heraldry are gold (or), red (gules), blue (azure), silver (argent), green (vert), black (sable), and purple (purpure). In addition, there are two minor tinctures that are added to the list, tenne (tawny orange), and murrey (a tint between "gules and purpure") (Fox-Davies, 1925, p.72).

GOLD or OR - This is the color of princes, what Bartolo di sasso Ferrato writing in the fourteenth century describes as "a nobler colour . . . representing the light of the sun" (Dennys, HI, p.46). The Sicily herald places gold as first in the hierarchy of tinctures and metals of heraldry and equates gold with sunlight, the precious stone topaz and with the day Sunday. He describes the properties as "those of the age of adolescence and faith . . . and it corresponds to the virtues of richness and noblesse" (Dennys, HI, p.46). "Gold" may be represented in heraldic art by the color yellow (Cussans, p.294).

RED or GULES - This color is given second place in hierarchy of heraldic tinctures. In early medieval times there was no distinction between red and purple. At one time red was considered the color of kings, not rightly worn by anyone except those of royal blood. Any study of heraldry reveals that this restriction was disregarded long ago. The Llyfr Dysgread Arfau, a fourteenth-century Welsh treatise on heraldry says that red represents cruelty and should be worn by princes as "a prince ought to be cruel to his enemies, and it behoves him to punish disorder" (Dennys, HI, p.47). The Sicily Herald "equates it with the ruby, fire, the planet Mars, and with Wednesday and summer, and considers it symbolic of a sanguine temperament, nobleness, boldness and the age of virility" (Dennys, HI, p.47).

Tarvers identifies "red" as Morris's color choice for indicating "the state of the heart" (Tarvers, p.186). Examples of "red" associated with passion are found throughout Morris's Malory-inspired poems, but Tarvers points out Morris's ambiguous use of "red" in the historical and fantasy poems. With meanings ranging from "love" to something seen as "ominous or dangerous," Tarvers indicates that Morris's "red" imagery is unclear (Tarvers, p.189). Some of Morris's "red" images can be explained, or at least made more clear, by recognizing the instances in which Morris employs the heraldic symbolism of the color.

The primary heraldic use of "red" in The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems occurs when Morris describes flags.

In heraldry, the type of flag used has a symbolic meaning in addition to that of its color or emblazonment. Banners are the highest ranking, usually denoting a distinctive mark of achievement and can be emblazoned with arms and attached to a staff, lance, or trumpet. The pennon is a small narrow flag with its fly ending in two points. It can be emblazoned with charges and attached to the end of a lance. The standard looks like an elongated pennon. It is not a mark of distinction, and can only be emblazoned with a crest, badge, or motto. The color of a standard is usually the livery colors, while the color of a banner and a pennon is the color of the shield in the coat of arms (Cussans, p.262-265). The type of flag, in combination with its colors and devices, produces an image that provides the underlying meaning Morris wishes to achieve.

BLUE or AZURE - Randle Holme tells us that this shade must not be too dark as it "doth represent the Sky in a clear Sun-shining day . . . and signifyeth Piety and Sincerity" (Dennys, HI, p.47). Nicholas Upton calls blue the heavenly color and says its' shade appears in sapphires with the property to take away envy and fear, to strengthen the wearer making him victorious, "to strength a man hys mind in goodness and to make the berar meke, lowly and jentyll" (Dennys, HI, p.47). Sicily Herald equates blue with the planet Jupiter, "the quality of justice and purity, and Tuesday and the autumn season" (Dennys, HI, p.47).

SILVER or ARGENT - This is the second metal of heraldry and is placed fourth in the hierarchy by both Bartolo and Bonet. Silver is usually represented by white in heraldic art. Sicily Herald gives it second place, coming after gold and corresponding "to the virtues of purity and justice, to the age of childhood and hope. It is appropriate for those of phlegmatic temperament, and should be equated with the pearl and the moon, and with Monday (Dennys, HI, p.46).

GREEN or VERT - In the later Middle Ages "emerald" and "venus" were also used to denote green. Green is sometimes left out of medieval lists of tinctures, and when included has a confused meaning. Randle Holme in 1669 calls green the color of felicity and pleasure. Bado Aureo first says that green is the color used for jesters and then later in Tractatus de Armis has green as the primary color in the attributed arms of King Arthur (Dennys, HI, p.47). Dennys explains the problems of green in this manner:

> There seems to have been an antipathy towards the color until well into the fifteenth century, for it is not often found in the earlier armory. This may possibly have been because, in the literature of the time, while bright green was emblematic of spring - like the surcoat, shield and trappings of the Green Knight . . . pale green was regarded as emblematic of death (Dennys, HI, p.48).

Sicily Herald also expresses some confusion of meaning when describing the color green as "symbolic of jolliness and youth, but also of beauty and shame . . . and equates it with Thursday and spring" (Dennys, HI, p.47).

"Green" is the color of banners, tapestries, and room furnishings in The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems creating a sense of romance influenced by Morris's youthful experiences. Morris described the essence of this romance in the memory of a room that he had visited as a child.

> A room hung with faded greenery at Queen Elizabeth's Lodge by Chingford Hatch in Epping Forest . . . and the impression of romance that it made upon me! A feeling that always comes back on me when I read . . . Scott's 'Antiquary' and come to the description of the Green Room at Monkbarns, amongst which the novelist has with such exquisite cunning of art imbedded the fresh and glittering verses of the summer poet Chaucer; yes, that was more than upholstery, believe me (Mckail, p.11).

Black or Sable - This is considered the lowest of all colors and is sometimes represented by the diamond and the planet Saturn. Bartolo felt that this color should be used only by the religious community as part of their attempt to "eschew vainglory" (Dennys, HI, p.47). Sicily Herald says

black is "symbolic of sadness and decrepitude and a melancholic temperament, and corresponds with Friday and the season of winter" (Dennys, HI, p.47).

Mckail relates that Morris's love for the medieval centered on the Teutonic stock rather than the Welsh or Celtic. (Mckail, p.13). This influence of the German heraldic tradition might be observed in some of Morris's color terminology.

> German heraldry has added brown, blood-red (this is apparently different from the English sanguine, as a different hatching has been invented for it) earth-colour, iron-grey, water-colour, flesh-colour, ashen-grey, orange . . . and the colour of nature (Fox-Davies, 1925, p.74).

The color of nature is what heraldic art calls the "proper" color for an object, that is the color that the object has in reality such as a red rose or a brown horse.

NOTES

[1] Josephine Koster Tarvers, "'The Deep Still Land of Colours': Color Imagery in The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems," Studies In Philology 84 (1987): 193.

[2] Rodney Dennys, The Heraldic Imagination (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1975) 88.

[3] Cecil B. Lang, ed., The Pre-Raphaelites and Their Circle, 2nd. ed. rev. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975) 509.

[4] Philip Henderson, William Morris His Life, Work and Friends (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967) 5-7.

[5] Joanna Banham, "'Past and Present': Images of the Middle Ages in the Early Nineteenth Century," William Morris and the Middle Ages, ed. Joanna Banham and Jennifer Harris (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984) 25.

[6] Banham 25.

[7] Aymer Vallance, William Morris His Art His Writings and His Public Life: A Record (London: Studio Editions, 1986) 4-5.

[8] John E. Cussans, The Handbook of Heraldry (London: John Camden Hotten, 1869) 16.

[9] Cussans 259-263.

[10] J. W. Mackail, The Life of William Morris (New York: Longmans, 1938) 12.

[11] Mackail 12.

[12] It has been suggested by Professor John Conlee of The College of William and Mary that Morris's familiarity with the Apocalypse manuscript (13th century, Bodleian Library) possibly inspired the overtones of death associated with the grey horse in "King Arthur's Tomb."

[13] Henderson 15.

[14] Mackail 40.

[15] Mackail 84.

[16] Ian C. Bradley, William Morris and His World (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978) 15.

[17] Joseph Dunlop, "Morris and the Book Arts Before the Kelmscott Press," Victorian Poetry 13.3-4 (1975): 143-144.

[18] Carole Silver, The Romance of William Morris (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1982) 6.

[19] Robert Keane, "Rossetti and Morris: This Ever-Diverse Pair," The Golden Chain: Essays on William Morris and Pre-Raphaelitism, Carole Silver ed. (New York and London: The William Morris Society, 1982) 115.

[20] Silver, Golden vi (caption for photograph of "Arthur's Tomb" by Dante Gabriel Rossetti). See also in the same volume Keane 130-132.

[21] Rosalie Mander, "Rossetti and the Oxford Murals," Pre-Raphaelite Papers Leslie Parris, ed. (London: The Tate Gallery, 1984) 180.

[22] Julian Treuherz, "The Pre-Raphaelites and Mediaeval Illuminated Manuscripts," Pre-Raphaelite Papers, Leslie Parris, ed. (London: The Tate Gallery, 1984) 163.

[23] Tarvers 183.

[24] Margaret A. Lourie, "The Embodiment of Dreams: William Morris' 'Blue Closet' Group," Victorian Poetry 15.3 (1977) 197.

[25] Arthur Charles Fox-Davies, A Complete Guide to Heraldry, Rev. ed. (London: T. C. & E. C. Jack, Ltd., 1925) 91-94.

[26] Cussans 260-264.

[27] Dennys, Heraldic Imagination 47.

[28] Dennis R. Balch, "Guenevere's Fidelity to Arthur in 'The Defence of Guenevere' and 'King Arthur's Tomb.'" Victorian Poetry 13.3-4 (1975) 62-63.

[29] Tarvers 188.

[30] Tarvers 187-189.

[31] Dennys, Heraldic Imagination 47.

[32] Dennys, Heraldic Imagination 47.

[33] Sir Walter Scott, Ivanhoe A. Marion Merrill, ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1916) 87.

[34] Cussans 314.

[35] Dennys, Heraldic Imagination 89-90.

[36] Arthur Charles Fox-Davies, The Art Of Heraldry, (London: Bloomsbury Books, 1904, 1986) 199.

[37] William Morris, The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems, Margaret A. Lourie, ed. (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1981) 12.

NOTE: Lourie attributes this use of historical detail to create a sympathetic character from either an unknown or a questionable personality, to Browning's influence on Morris through his dramatic dialogues such as "Andrea del Sarto."

[38] Dennys, Heraldic Imagination 46-47.

[39] Morris, Lourie, ed. 206.

NOTE: Lourie believes that Morris created Lambert's coat of arms, basing it on several similar examples. She says of the gold rings, "In heraldry, rings were often gem rings and hence associated with material wealth. Lambert's pecuniary self-interest soon becomes apparent." (Lourie, "Notes to 'Sir

Peter Harpdon's End,'" William Morris, The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems p.206).

Plain gold rings (or annulets) in heraldry are also used as a mark of cadency, denoting the birth rank of the bearer as that of fifth son (Cussans, p. 101). One wonders if Morris has given Lambert this charge as a means of displaying his claims on family wealth and nobility as being somewhat tenuous.

[40] Morris, Lourie ed. 201.

[41] Fox-Davies, Complete 472.

[42] Fox-Davies, Complete 327-332.

NOTE: The helm crest is a decorative accoutrement placed on top of the knight's helmet. Originally a knight's helmet was topped by a ridge or fan shape that helped to deflect enemies blows, thus protecting the head. In the Middle Ages it became fashionable for a knight to adopt a highly painted fan shape or three dimensional figure based on a device emblazoned on his shield to top his helmet. As these became more elaborate and heavier ("modelled crests" made of boiled leather or carved from wood) they were only worn for tournaments.

[43] Fox-Davies, Art 118. "The woman's head in heraldry is always represented young and beautiful (that is, if the

artist is capable of so drawing it), and it is almost invariably found with golden hair. The colour, however, should be blazoned, the term 'crined' being used."

[44] Morris, Lourie ed. 218-219.

NOTE: Professor John Conlee of The College of William and Mary suggests that the red banner with the three golden lions represents King Richard I of England.

[45] Cussans 70.

[46] Dianne Sadoff, "The Poetics of Repetition and The Defence of Guenevere," in The Golden Chain:Essays on William Morris and Pre-Raphaelitism, Carole G. Silver, ed. (New York & London: The William Morris Society, 1982) 107.

[47] Sadoff 106.

[48] Silver, Romance 16.

[49] Kate Greenaway, The Language of Flowers (New York: Merrimac Publishing Company) 20.

[50] Majorie Blamey and Philip Blamey, Flowers of the Countryside (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1980) 148.

[51] Silver, Romance 13.

[52] Silver, Romance 13-14.

[53] George Ferguson, Signs and Symbols in Christian Art (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) 153.

[54] Blamey 148.

NOTE: "The name Dianthus is said to be derived from the ancient Greek words for 'flower of the gods'--Dios anthos.

Deptford Pink (Dianthus armeria) is an annual whereas all the others are perennial. It flowers from June to August in dry sandy places and is a rare native in Britain, unlike the Wild Pink (D. plumarius) which may be seen on the walls of old Norman Castles, confirming the suggestion that it was introduced to Britain when the castles were built of imported stone. In medieval times it was the symbol of true love.

The Clove Scented Pink (D. caryophyllus) is almost certainly the 'gillyflower'of Shakespeare's time. The name was anglicized from the Old French girofle meaning 'love flower'. Both Clove and Wild Pinks are fragrant and were crossed and bred to produce the highly scented garden carnation."

[55] Morris, Lourie, ed. 224.

[56] NOTE: Lourie states "During tournaments knights wore on their helmets their ladies' tokens, not their own devices. The gilliflower is thus probably the lady's insignia rather than the speaker's" (Morris, Lourie ed., 225).

However, Arthur Charles Fox-Davies makes no mention of this practice in his discussion of "The Crest." Fox-Davies states that there is much discussion as to the origin and significance of the crest. "Many have asserted that no one below the rank of a knight had the right to use a crest. . .that only those who were of tournament rank might assume the distinction, and herein lies another confirmation of the supposition that crests had a closer relation to the tournament than to the battle-field. Doubts as to a man's social position might disqualify him from participation in a tournament. . .but they certainly never relieved him from the obligations of warfare imposed by the tenure under which he held his lands. There is no doubt, however, that whatever the regulation may have been--and there seems little chance of our ever obtaining any real knowledge upon the point--the right to display a crest was an additional privilege and honor, something extra and beyond the right to a shield of arms" (Fox-Davies, Art 258).

[57] Morris, Lourie, ed. 230.

[58] Fox-Davies, Art 181.

[59] Dennys 46.

[60] The Herder Symbol Dictionary (Wilmette, Il: Chiron Publications, 1978) 143-144.

[61] Morris, Lourie ed. 231.

[62] Morris, Lourie ed. 246.

[63] Morris, Lourie ed. 246.

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